

**PLANNING COMMISSION  
SUMMARY MINUTES  
COMMISSIONER'S HEARING ROOM, COUPEVILLE, WA  
MONDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2015**

	<i>Members Present</i>	<i>Members Absent</i>
<i>District 1</i>	<i>Val Hillers</i>	
	<i>Dean Enell – Vice Chair</i>	
	<i>Karen Krug</i>	
<i>District 2</i>	<i>Jeffery Wallin– Chair</i>	
		<i>George Saul</i>
		<i>Darin Hand</i>
<i>District 3</i>		<i>Vacant</i>
	<i>Beth Munson</i>	
		<i>Scott Yonkman</i>

Meeting was called to order at 2:04 p.m. by Chair Wallin.

**ROLL CALL**

Dean Enell, Val Hillers, Jeff Wallin, Karen Krug, Beth Munson

**MINUTES**

None

Planning staff present: Keith Higman-Director of Long Range Planning, Meredith Penny-Long Range Planner

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Keith Higman introduced himself and his career with Island County. He introduced Beckye Frye, Senior Planner in the Long Range Plan.

**ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC**

*Tim Kangas, Freeland*

Mr. Kangas wished to speak on Rural Events issues. He has committed himself to create a draft framework to submit to the Planning Commission. The draft was provided to the Planning and Community Development Director. His intention is to do his very best to help Island County owners improve their operations. Last Friday the Planning Commission members should have received the process proposal via e-mail.

*Mary Walsh, South Whidbey*

Ms. Walsh wanted more information on the issue of the event center code. She has looked at the different processes in California and their experience with wineries. The different jurisdictions describe agritourism as related to and subservient to the crops, land and animals. What seems to have happened over the years there, the line gets really blurred by the lack of enforcement or aggressive tourism or the inability to make it work in terms of community compatibility. She talked about the difficulty Sonoma County had with the issue. One of the biggest issues is noise because it cannot be enforced and it is difficult to measure; it is the one issue that is important to the homeowners around event centers. There are different ways of measuring noise:

- Decibel meters.
- Standing 100 feet from the property line.

- Not enough County personnel and police show up at 10 and ask the music to be brought down.
- How is it determined that agriculture is still the main purpose of a farm or a winery? Is it determined by income, if the majority of the income comes from events then it is no longer an agricultural property, then it is just window dressing.

*Susan Bennett, Freeland*

Ms. Bennett wanted to express her concern about the trees and thinks it would be good to have the Forest Practice Workshop Commissioner Enell asked for. Forest management does not have to be a monoculture. The State is the lead on Forest Management but there have to be loop holes to allow Island County Code to address saving the trees, not just for timber, they provide oxygen, hold water from creating wetlands and protect the fragile bluffs and wetlands.

*Mike Holota, Langley*

Mr. Holota lives near the Comfort Winery. When they moved into the home they understood there was a winery in the area and had the understanding that they understood they lived in the middle a residential neighborhood. Then things started happening, he would take photos and start getting involved in the process. The more he reads and listens to different people, he is starting to understand there is something going on that a green light was not given. He discussed the location of the Notice of Application sign and the proposal stated on the sign, the drainfield, and the picture of the Comfort's building location. They do not have permission to build a rural event center; he hopes the County does not just allow one entity to dictate what happens on the Island.

## **WORKSHOPS**

Discussion of the Rural Lands Survey and public meetings being held as part of the public outreach strategy.

Chair Wallin read the purpose of Planning Commission Workshops.

Keith Higman discussed the scoping process of the Rural Lands Survey.

- Allowed uses and conditional uses.
- In order to understand the publics concerns staff worked with WSU to create focus groups.
- Results from survey were used to hold public meetings.

Meredith Penny explained the process of the Rural Lands Survey.

- Received 76 responses from the 800 surveys sent out.
- There were obvious needs to address and clarify public confusion.
- She discussed the materials provided to the Planning Commission and results of the responses.

Planning Commission members made the following comments:

- Commissioner Enell confirmed the survey was sent out to 800 residents.
- Commissioner Munson asked if there was a way of tracking where the responses were received from.
  - Meredith Penny responded that the survey was an online survey and there is no way of tracking the information.

- Commissioner Hillers said the information gathered was very valuable for what people think and is representative of Island County.
  - Meredith Penny explained the structure and topics for the meetings.
- Commissioner Enell asked how the surveys will be done in the future.
  - Keith Higman said the focus group was intended to invite individuals to participate in dialogue. The selection of the individuals that were included were those who are actively participating in rural activities in rural zones. The themes generated from those activities resulted in the development of the survey. He agrees that 76 responses are hard to draw conclusions but he is not sure they will have the capacity large enough to say there is data set large enough and random enough to draw conclusions on what the population thinks about a specific topic. The focus group activity resulted in the development of the survey which will result in the four community meetings. They will then take the data and see if it was large enough and robust enough to draw conclusions from it. He is already getting questions about a portion of the population that is likely missing in any of the outreach activities, i.e. working families. He asks the Planning Commission to let him know if they think there is a group that is not represented in the discussions.
- Commissioner Hillers agrees there is a need to solicit opinion but this is not a typical process of how the Planning Commission goes about developing regulations. She said taking public testimony is typically the way they gauge community input and make recommendations to the Commissioners. She is not telling staff to not do what they are doing but there isn't a need to have a perfect survey response.
  - Keith Higman said he was under the impression that there was a desire to create community conversations around rural land uses.
- Commissioner Enell said the public engagement with the surveys is wonderful and the survey was done well.
- Commissioner Krug said if there are going to be any other effort; the notices should not go in the foreclosure section of the newspaper.
- Commissioner Hillers asked if there is a schedule of when they will get to work on revising the Code.
  - Keith Higman said there will be work product towards the end of the year. With the next meetings, themes, comparison with focus groups, he thinks it will be late fall, early winter when staff provides documents.
- Commissioner Enell said an approach to consider is to rather than put all the uses into one category they are going to end up with a number of distinct uses and may be the direction they will be going.
- Commissioner Hiller said there are a number of people that are interested in this topic and are attending the meetings; she asked staff if those individuals when there are materials ready.
  - Keith Higman said that staff can provide the materials and asked the audience to provide staff with their contact information.

## Overview of the Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve provided by Kristen Griffin, Reserve Manager.

Kristen Griffin discussed her experience and Ebey's Landing National Reserve. She explained the involvement of government and the importance of preservation. The purpose of the workshop is to provide the Planning Commission with an overview of the Reserve.

### A National Reserve

- An area designated by Congress in order to preserve, protect and interpret unique and nationally significant natural, historical and cultural resources
- Park vs. Reserve: it isn't the significance of the resource, but in the approach to management
- Operational authority can be placed with local government partner(s)

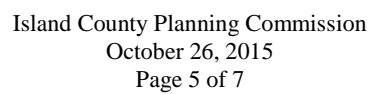
National Parks and Recreation Act, 1978, P.L. 95-625, Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve

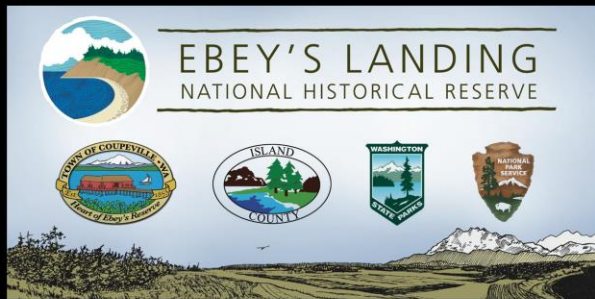
*There is hereby established the Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve in order to preserve and protect a rural community, which provides an unbroken historical record from eighteenth century exploration and settlement in Puget Sound to the present time, and to commemorate important events in Pacific Northwest history;*

- Exploration of Puget Sound by Captain George Vancouver in 1792;
- First Euro-American settlement by Isaac Ebey and those that followed;
- Homesteading years of the Donation Land Law of 1850;
- Growth since 1883 of the historic town of Coupeville.



- [illegible]





19,000 - 24-square miles - 85% privately owned

### How do we Preserve the Reserve?

Creative conservation and planned development

Easements: voluntary transfer of development rights

Local design review and land use regulation, like zoning

Partnerships

Voluntary cooperation



### Comprehensive Plan = the initial vision for the reserve

To achieve the purpose of the section, the Secretary, in cooperation with the appropriate State and local units of government, shall **formulate a comprehensive plan** for the protection, preservation and interpretation of the Reserve.

The plan shall identify those areas or **zones** within the Reserve which would most appropriately be devoted to

- A. Public use and development
- B. Historic and natural preservation
- C. Private use subject to appropriate local zoning ordinances designed to protect the historic rural setting.

Within eighteen months following the date of enactment of this section, the Secretary shall transmit the plan...

### Possible Updates

- Trust Board feedback in process; Trust Board staff available to assist
- Context and introduction
- Reinforce the original visioning: collaborative protection, preservation and interpretation of the Reserve
- Address the relationship between current chapter and subsequent planning
- Review County existing objectives and duties (interlocal agreements)
- New ways to help? Incentives

After the presentation, Kristen Griffin and the Planning Commissioners discussed several topics regarding economics, development, management and historical locations.

Keith Higman informed the Planning Commission that the function of the Planning Department has been separated into two pieces. He presented Hiller West as the new Director of Planning and Community Development.

Hiller West stated he looked forward to working with the Planning Commission.

*Commissioner Hillers moved to adjourn, Commissioner Krug seconded, motion carried unanimously.*

Meeting adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Shaddy